

time. I thank the House for considering this resolution today, and I extend my very best thoughts, prayers and gratitude to the Ganci family for all they have gone through.

Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I thank my colleague for introducing this legislation to honor the chief of the New York City Fire Department. As the wife of a professional firefighter for almost 30 years, I know the bravery that these firefighters have, and I have had people tell me why they let chiefs send men in there to their deaths, and I have told them quite clearly, if he would not have sent them in, I know the firefighters would have gone in, anyway. That is just the type of bravery they do have, and again, I thank my colleagues, and I urge adoption of this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5336.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

NAT KING COLE POST OFFICE

Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4797) to redesignate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 265 South Western Avenue, Los Angeles, California, as the "Nat King Cole Post Office."

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 4797

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) Nat King Cole was born Nathaniel Adams Coles in Montgomery, Alabama, during the difficult period of segregation in the United States, and was raised in the ghettos of the south side of Chicago, Illinois, where he endured the harshness of poverty.

(2) Nat King Cole was often confronted with racism during his career, including being attacked by members of a white supremacist group while he was on stage in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1956.

(3) Nat King Cole allowed neither poverty nor racism to prevent him from sharing his music with people worldwide and from leaving a lasting impression on American culture.

(4) Nat King Cole established himself as the best selling African-American recording artist of his generation.

(5) Nat King Cole and his family became the first African-American family to integrate the community of Hancock Park in Los Angeles when, despite threats and protests from local residents, they purchased their English Tudor mansion in 1948.

(6) "The Nat King Cole Show", primarily broadcast from Burbank, California, aired

nationally for more than a year beginning in 1956 and was the first television show to be hosted by an African-American artist.

(7) Nat King Cole graced southern California with his music during the formative years of his music career and formed the successful "King Cole Trio" in Los Angeles, California.

(8) Nat King Cole's recording of "Route 66" serenaded generations of eager California immigrants.

(9) Nat King Cole's recorded rendition of "The Christmas Song" symbolizes the family warmth of the yuletide season.

(10) Nat King Cole's disarming delivery teaches people the meaning of "Unforgettable".

(11) Although Nat King Cole died from lung cancer on February 15, 1965, the music and embracing baritone voice of Nat King Cole are lasting legacies that continue to be enjoyed by people worldwide.

(12) Nat King Cole exemplifies the American dream by having overcome societal and other barriers to become one of the great American entertainers.

(13) Members of the community surrounding the Oakwood Station Post Office in Los Angeles, California, have advocated for the renaming of the post office in honor of Nat King Cole, a former resident of the area.

SEC. 2. REDESIGNATION AND REFERENCES.

(a) REDESIGNATION.—The facility of the United States Postal Service located at 265 South Western Avenue, Los Angeles, California, and known as the Oakwood Station Post Office, shall be known and designated as the "Nat King Cole Post Office".

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the "Nat King Cole Post Office".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Virginia?

There was no objection.

Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

H.R. 4797, introduced by the gentleman from the State of California (Mr. BECERRA), designates the post office located at 265 South Western Avenue, Los Angeles, California, as the Nat King Cole Post Office. Members of the entire delegation from the State of California are cosponsors of the bill.

Nat King Cole was truly one of the most unforgettable entertainers in our Nation's history. Born in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1919, Nat King Cole was a musical pioneer that helped to pave the way for countless black musicians to achieve success in the United States. Most widely known for his music as a

pop ballad singer and jazz pianist, Nat was also the first African American man to have his own radio show, which began in 1946. Ten years later he was the first African American to host his own television show, and it was enormously popular as well.

Although his life was sadly cut short in 1965, his legacy has lived on in part because of the great success of his daughter, Natalie, who has revived much of Nat King Cole's music by singing many of his songs in recent years.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all my colleagues to honor Nat King Cole by supporting this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I might consume.

H.R. 4797, to redesignate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 265 South Western Avenue, Los Angeles, California, as the Nat King Cole Post Office, was introduced by the gentleman from California (Mr. BECERRA), on May 22, 2002.

Nat King Cole was born Nathaniel Adams Coles in 1919 in Montgomery, Alabama. He moved to the great jazz city of Chicago when he was four because his father, a Baptist minister, had accepted pastorship of the True Light Baptist Church.

In Chicago, Nat King Cole's mother, Perlina, directed the choir at her husband's church and introduced all the Coles children, Edward, Nathaniel, Eddie Mae, Evelynne, Issac and Lionel, to music early on. All four of the Coles sons went on to become professional musicians.

Nat's singing career began early. He was just four when he performed, "Yes, We Have No Bananas." He went on to take piano lessons and play the organ in his father's church. While attending Wendell Phillips High School in Chicago which, of course, is in my congressional district, Nat and his brothers became true believers of jazz music and constant fixtures on Chicago's South Side, the center of jazz.

□ 1445

Growing up, he was most influenced by pianist Earl "Fatha" Hines. After organizing and playing in a series of music groups, Nat "King" Cole moved to Los Angeles, where he formed the group which later became the King Cole Trio. He recorded his first National hit, Straighten Up and Fly Right, and went on to record such favorites as The Christmas Song, Mona Lisa, Route 66, Chestnuts Roasting on an Open Fire, Rambling Rose, and many more.

Not only a talented singer, he was also the first black jazz musician to have his own weekly radio show in 1948 and 1949 and network television show in 1956 and 1957. He was also an actor in St. Louis Blues, 1958, and Cat Ballou in 1964.

Although a great man with a fantastic voice, Nat "King" Cole was not

immune to discrimination. His television show was canceled because he could not find a national sponsor. Being black was seen by many as the reason for the lack of advertising. When he moved to an exclusive section of Los Angeles in 1949, neighbors formed an association to keep him from moving in. In 1956, while playing to a segregated audience in Birmingham, Alabama, he was attacked by a group of white men. After completing his performance, Nat "King" Cole vowed never to return to the South, and he never did.

In 1965, after battling an advanced case of lung cancer, Nat "King" Cole died on February 15 at Saint John's Hospital in Santa Monica, California.

Mr. Speaker, I would urge swift passage of this bill and commend my colleague from California for seeking to honor the legacy of the late Nat "King" Cole in this manner.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Los Angeles, California (Mr. BECERRA).

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Illinois, someone who represents the area where Mr. Cole lived for a time, for yielding me this time. I also would like to thank the chairman of the committee, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) and the ranking member, the gentleman from California (Mr. WAXMAN), and the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS) as well for this opportunity to bring forward a tribute to an individual who will go down in the annals of America as not just a grand entertainer but a decent and loving American.

I want to extend my thanks to my colleagues from California, the 54 Members of the California delegation, which includes our two Senators, for their support of the Cole family in this effort to give Nat "King" Cole the recognition in this small way that he so deserves from this country. I would also like to thank the many other Members who signed onto this legislation as original cosponsors, many from the Congressional Black Caucus and other colleagues who recognized that it was fitting to pay tribute to this individual.

Mr. Speaker, Nat "King" Cole is but a legend in America, but in our hearts he is someone who was able to touch us. H.R. 4797 is but a small token of appreciation that will forever give memory to his work and his love of this country. On South Western Avenue in Los Angeles, California, at the site of 265 South Western Avenue, those who happen to cross that busy street will have an opportunity to see the name of Nat "King" Cole, and, hopefully, they will appreciate what it takes to have one's name on the marquis of a post of-

fice, a building owned and operated by the people of this government and of this Nation.

I cannot, however, nor can my colleagues, be the only ones to take credit for this opportunity to fete Nat "King" Cole. The fact that we are designating this post office after a legend is truly due to the people who live in and around the area of 265 South Western Avenue, because it is the folks who live in the community that surround this area who chose Nat "King" Cole as the person to pay tribute to and to name this post office after. I want to thank all of them for having stepped forward and in a very democratic process and deciding that it was best and most fitting to name this post office after a former resident of the area, and certainly a man that we will all remember.

As my colleague, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS), had said, Nat "King" Cole remains an icon as one of America's most beloved entertainers, even 37 years after his untimely death in 1965. His story is one of determination, courage and resilience. We recognize him today as one of the pioneers who left his mark in an industry that is now part of the fabric of Los Angeles. But his impression on our city and this Nation goes far beyond that.

Nat "King" Cole was born Nathaniel Adams Coles in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1919 during that very regrettable period of segregation in this country. At the age of 4, Nat's father moved the Coles family, and it is Coles with an "s," to Chicago, where his father accepted the pastorship of the True Light Baptist Church. Nat spent his childhood in the ghettos of the South Side of Chicago. But while Nat did not have the means to dream, he certainly had the capacity to do so, and, ultimately, live out those dreams.

Perlina Coles, Nat's mother, directed the choir at the True Light Baptist Church, and she is the one that introduced the Coles children to music early on. Nat's musical talents exhibited themselves at a very, very young age. His first public performance was at the age of 4 in Chicago's Regal Theater. As a youngster, Nat would sing and play the organ at his father's church. His mother wanted Nat to become a classical pianist, but Nat's passion was jazz.

Chicago was just the place to be for Nat "King" Cole to satisfy those tastes for jazz music. The city, at the time, hosted jazz talents like Louis Armstrong, Fats Waller, Earl Hines. And we should all recognize that not long ago, this past week, we lost Mr. Lionel Hampton, another great of American entertainment and art and a great jazz artist in his own right.

Nat and his brother Eddie would go off as often as they could to hear jazz musicians play and to perform in Chicago's South Side, which was the African American community's center for jazz action in the 1930s. Even when Nat could not afford the price of admission,

he would stand at the alley and listen right next to the stage door.

During his teenage years, Nat "King" Cole was involved with several musical groups. He loved to perform and to share his music with others. In 1937, Nat and Eddie joined a revival of the review "Shuffle Along." The show took the road after 6 weeks in Chicago. When the show suddenly folded, Nat found himself in Southern California, and that is where he decided to stay. This was the beginning of his life in the Los Angeles area, and we are all fortunate for his impression on Southern California.

In the late 1930s, Nat "King" Cole was asked to form a small group to play at a Los Angeles nightclub. It was the owner of this nightclub, Mr. Bob Lewis, who gave Nat his new renowned nickname of "King" Cole, and he asked Nat to wear a crown of gold on stage. In fact, the group became known as the King Cole Trio, and it was led by Nat. While the gold-colored paper crown did not last, the name and its significance endures to this day.

Many legends of entertainment got their break in Los Angeles and in Southern California, and that area proved to be fertile ground for Nat "King" Cole as well. The King Cole Trio developed a huge following. They found almost constant work in the Los Angeles area. And by the way, prior to booking the King Cole Trio, many of these nightclubs had never hired African American entertainers before. This trio went on to make some of their own recordings on what was known as the "race record" market, which is what made it possible for Nat "King" Cole to do the recordings. Because, remember, those were days when it was very difficult for talented men and women of African American descent to record and even to present their music and their talents before audiences.

In 1943, Capitol Records, then a fledgling company, signed the King Cole Trio. The Trio's recording on that label of Straighten Up and Fly Right became a smash hit in 1944, and it appealed to not just black audiences but white audiences as well. Nat "King" Cole composed this song and based the lyrics on one of his father's sermons. The recording also brought jazz and popular music together. The other works of this Trio included For Sentimental Reasons and The Christmas Song, which emphasized Nat "King" Cole as a vocalist for the first time. Before that, Nat "King" Cole would sing only on occasion to add some flavor to the instrumental trio.

In fact, if you look back at history, Nat would say that he never thought of himself much as a vocalist. And while we find that very hard to believe, that is what he thought. And not just then, but he held that view of his singing abilities even after he had become one of this country's most recognized singers. In fact, one of the world's most recognized singers. All of us would have to disagree at least on that point

in his assessment of his vocal abilities. Most would say his voice was "Unforgettable."

Nat "King" Cole indeed was a man with talents that could not be contained by any particular genre. He slowly moved away from jazz and towards popular music. In 1955, the King Cole Trio disbanded, but Nat "King" Cole continued to find success with songs like Too Young, Answer Me My Love, Mona Lisa and, of course, Unforgettable. Mr. Cole sold more than 50 million records. He contributed so much to the success of Capitol Records that its headquarters became known as the "House That Nat Built." His popularity would make him the first African American to have his own radio show and he would later also host his own TV shows.

However, Nat "King" Cole did not always have an easy road. He was not immune to the intolerance of the mid 20th Century. Indeed, as we look at his impressive songbook, we cannot forget the struggles he had to overcome as an African American performer during that period in our Nation's history. In October 1956, Nat "King" Cole was given his own television show by NBC. This show received good ratings but failed to receive sponsorship and it was taken off the air after only one year. Most believed that the primary lack of interest by advertisers was due to Nat "King" Cole's race.

But being taken off the air was not the only injustice Nat "King" Cole faced for being a successful black artist at the time. Nat faced physical intimidation and violence. In 1956, Nat returned to his native Alabama where his integrated group performed in front of a segregated audience in Birmingham. As a reaction, four members of the White Citizens Council attacked him on stage. But so determined was Nat "King" Cole, that even though he was hurt, he returned to the stage and finished his show.

In Los Angeles, where we will honor him with a post office that carries his name, Nat was not immune to prejudice. When Nat and his family wanted to move into the exclusive Hancock Park section of Los Angeles, residents of the all-white community formed an association to keep him and his family out. But despite the threats, Nat "King" Cole purchased and moved into his English Tudor mansion in Hancock Park.

Nat "King" Cole exemplifies the American dream. He endured the racism of the time and overcame the poverty to which he was born and worked to be one of the most beloved American entertainers of our time. Thirty-seven years after his untimely death from lung cancer on February 15, 1965, his legacy lives on. Modern popular music entertainers like Celine Dion continue to record songs made famous by Nat "King" Cole.

With determination, courage, and resilience, Nat "King" Cole overcame tremendous obstacles to leave a lasting

impression on music lovers of all ages and races. The Oakwood post office at 265 South Western Avenue in Los Angeles is Nat's post office. He lived within a few miles from the station and he is the pride of the community. I believe that this bill provides a fitting tribute to a man whose legacy is simply unforgettable.

To the many residents and friends and neighbors who made this possible today, and who will, when we have a chance to see President Bush sign this legislation into law, be present to commemorate this post office after Nat "King" Cole, I say, "Thank you so much for recognizing an American hero," and, "Thank you so much for helping us in the people's House recognize the accomplishments of great Americans."

□ 1500

Mr. Speaker, with great honor and deference, we recognize a man who will live far beyond our lifetime.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California (Mr. BECERRA) for his introduction and certainly for the statement the gentleman has just shared with us.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATSON).

Ms. WATSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time. And I thank the gentleman from California (Mr. BECERRA) for introducing this legislation.

I was just up in New York at the funeral for Lionel Hampton; and all of the way through, the talented performers would recall when they were all together, and Nat King Cole was part of that group. He was a man whose artistic talent was matched only by his efforts to break down the barriers that divided America from itself.

Nat King Cole had a gift of enormous musical talent. He did not like his singing voice; he thought it was not good enough so he thought he should play, but they talked him into singing while he was playing. He was known most for his singular voice, bringing alive such tunes as "Mona Lisa," "Rambling Rose," "The Christmas Song," and "Unforgettable." His daughter, Natalie Cole, would say that for many a year she mourned her father's death and did not have the courage to record with him until much later after his death; and the song "Unforgettable" truly will live forever. He was truly unforgettable.

But many experts considered his work as a pianist as his most significant contribution to American music. He was recognized among jazz musicians as one of the most formidable and technically proficient pianists of his day. His trio format influenced jazz pianist greats Ahmad Jamal and Art Tatum. In the 1940s, he played piano on recordings with jazz seminal jazz

greats Lester Young and Charlie Parker.

In 1956, Cole debuted his own television show, which quickly became a major hit. Despite its success, many major advertisers refused to have commercials aired on it for fear that they would alienate the white population and, in particular, their Southern customers.

Nat King Cole first recorded with Decca Records, and later with Capitol Records. Sales of his albums brought Capitol unprecedented commercial success, and some have even labeled Capitol Records' famous circular building in Hollywood as "The House that Nat Built."

But Nat King Cole's contribution to American art was matched by his contribution to American society. Cole was a quiet, but consistent, force for integration. During an age when many black artists were resigned to the reality of racial segregation, Cole refused to play in segregated clubs. In 1949 when Cole moved with his family to the exclusive Hancock Park neighborhood in Los Angeles, an area represented now by the gentleman from California (Mr. BECERRA) and myself, Cole faced hostility from his new neighbors. Yet Cole stood his ground, and successfully integrated the neighborhood, which remains one of Los Angeles' most prestigious addresses. So I am proud to join the gentleman from California (Mr. BECERRA) and the rest of my colleagues to rename a post office in the Hancock neighborhood after Nat King Cole. He is lovingly remembered as a great musical talent, but also as a great American.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I would close by saying that the life of Nat King Cole is another example of all that it has taken to make America the great Nation that it is. I join with my colleagues in urging swift passage of this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of this measure, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DAN MILLER of Florida). The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4797.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 3 o'clock and 5 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m.